



Prosody of left-dislocated objects in Estonian

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Estonian: short typological perspective

- Finno-Ugric language, closely related to Finnish
- Basic constituent order: subject – verb – object (SVO)
- Inflectional suffixes for nouns and verbs
- Subject-drop possible
- Flexible word order



Estonian: word order magic

Leftward shifted contrasts

Why on earth did you go to the building
supplies store?!

Akutrelli

otsisin!

O

V

drill.SG.PART

look for.1SG.PRES

'I was looking for a cordless drill!'



Theoretical accounts

Contrast Topic V-field

(Vilkuna, 1984)

... Force ... (Topic) ... (Focus) ... Fin IP

(Rizzi, 1997)



Leftward shifted contrasts in Estonian

NP_{OBJ} V NP_{SUBJ} V NP_{OBJ}

Consequences on intonation?

Sentence intonation reflects the word order (WO)
(Ukrainian (Antonyuk-Yudina & Mykhaylyk, 2010))

Sentence intonation reflects the focus structure (FOC)
(Hindi (Patil et al., 2008), German (Féry&Kügler, 2008))



Left-dislocated objects

What has the greatest influence on Estonian sentence prosody: Word order or focus



Experiment

Native Estonian speakers produced responses to questions or statements regarding a series of pictures.

There were three types of leading sentences:



Broad reading (Broad)

C1: Mis uudist?
what news.SG.PART
'What's up?'

New reading (New)

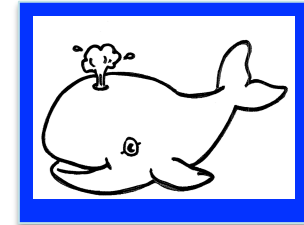
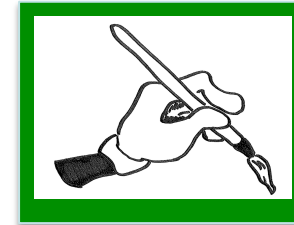
C2: Keegi ju maalis vaala?
somebody part draw.3SG whale.SG.PART
'Somebody drew the whale?'

Corrective reading => contrast (Contrast)

C3: Leena maalis moone
Leena.NOM draw.3SG.PAST poppy.PL.PART
'Leena drew poppies.'



Expected response (regardless of condition)



T1:	Leena	maalis	vaala
	S	V	O
	Leena.NOM	to draw.2SG.PAST	whale.SG.PART
T2:	Vaala	maalis	Leena.
	O	V	S
	whale.SG.PART	to draw.2SG.PAST	Leena.NOM

'Leena drew a whale.'



Experiment: data

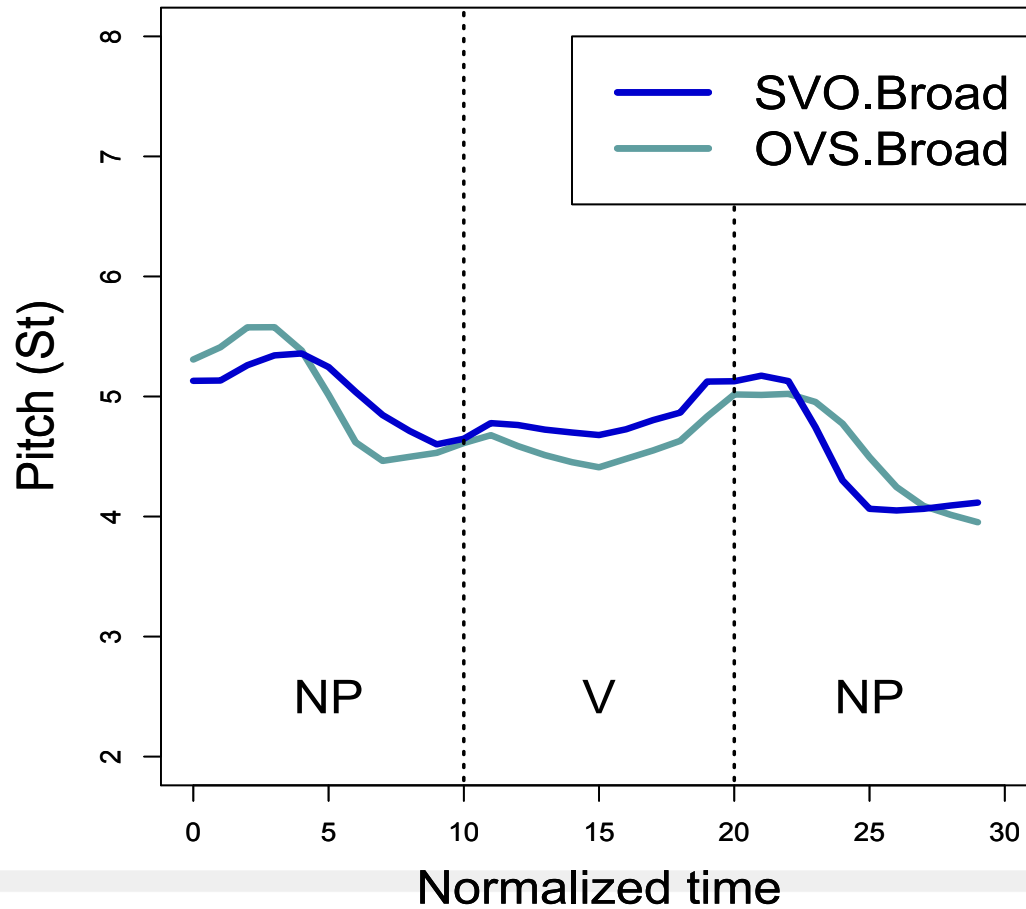
8 speakers, 4 females and 4 males (age between 23 and 40):

	North-Estonian	South-Estonian
Female	3	1
Male	1	3

24 responses per speaker (192 altogether)

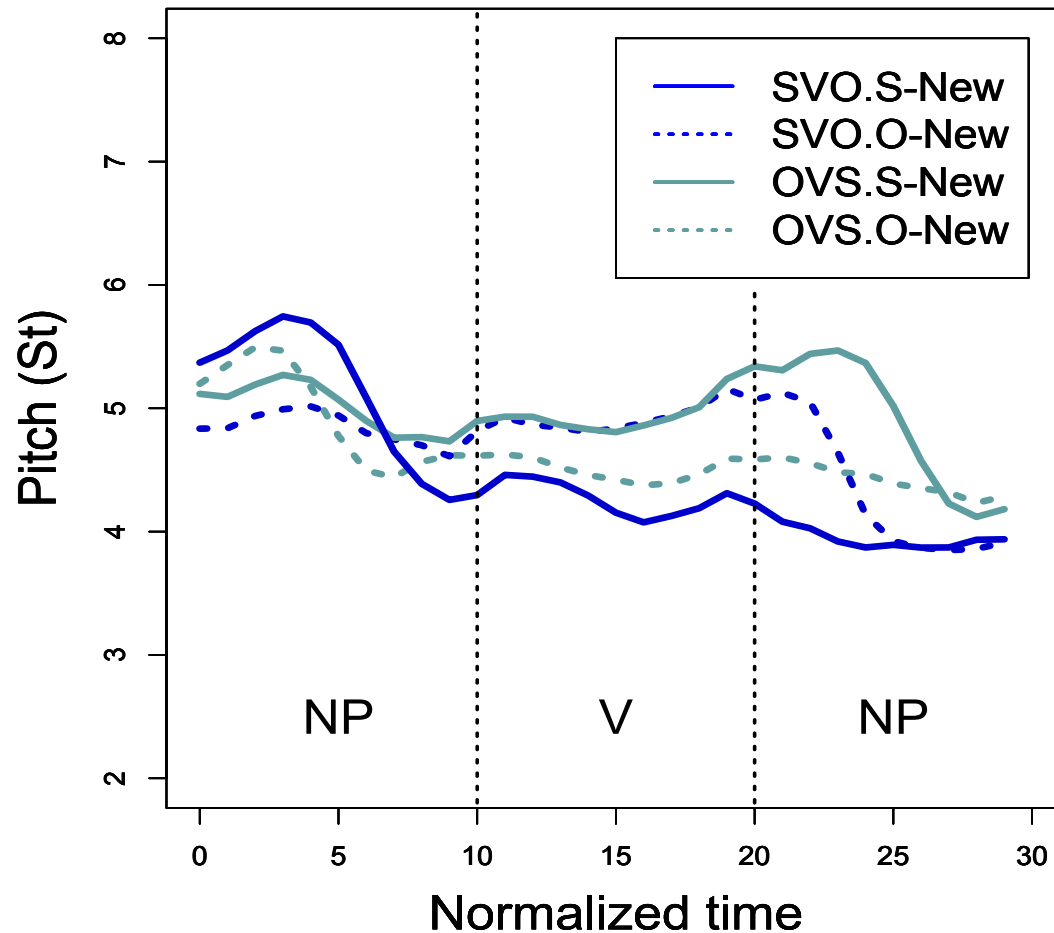


Intonation curve: Broad



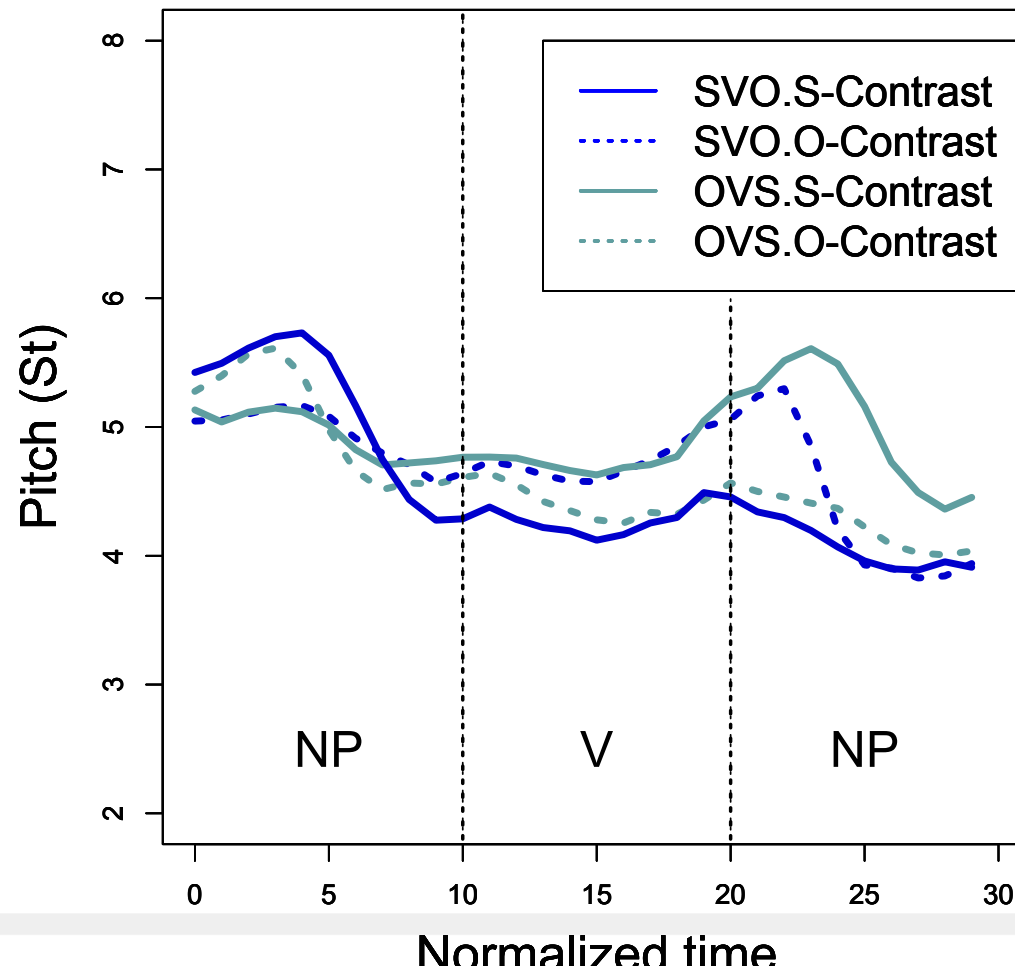


Whole intonation curve: New





Whole intonation curve: Contrast

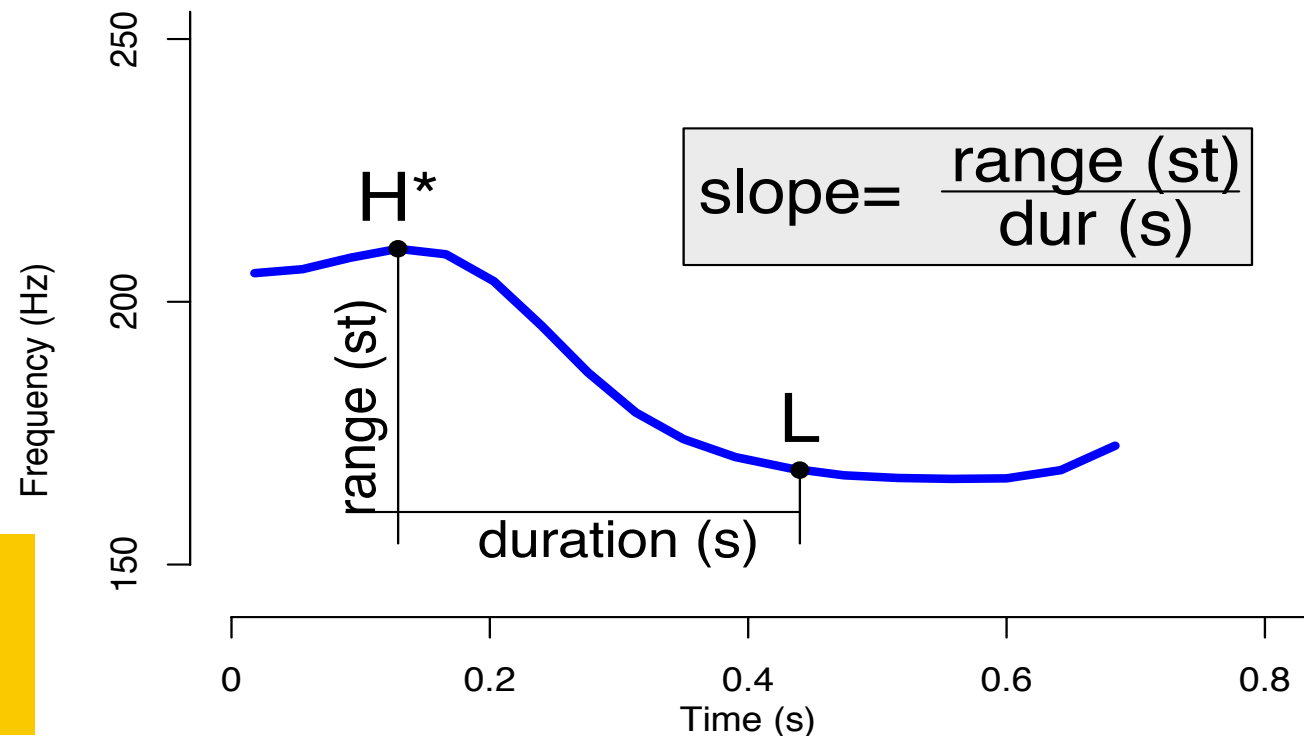




Experiment: analysis

Slope of fall: rate of change of F0 (st/s)

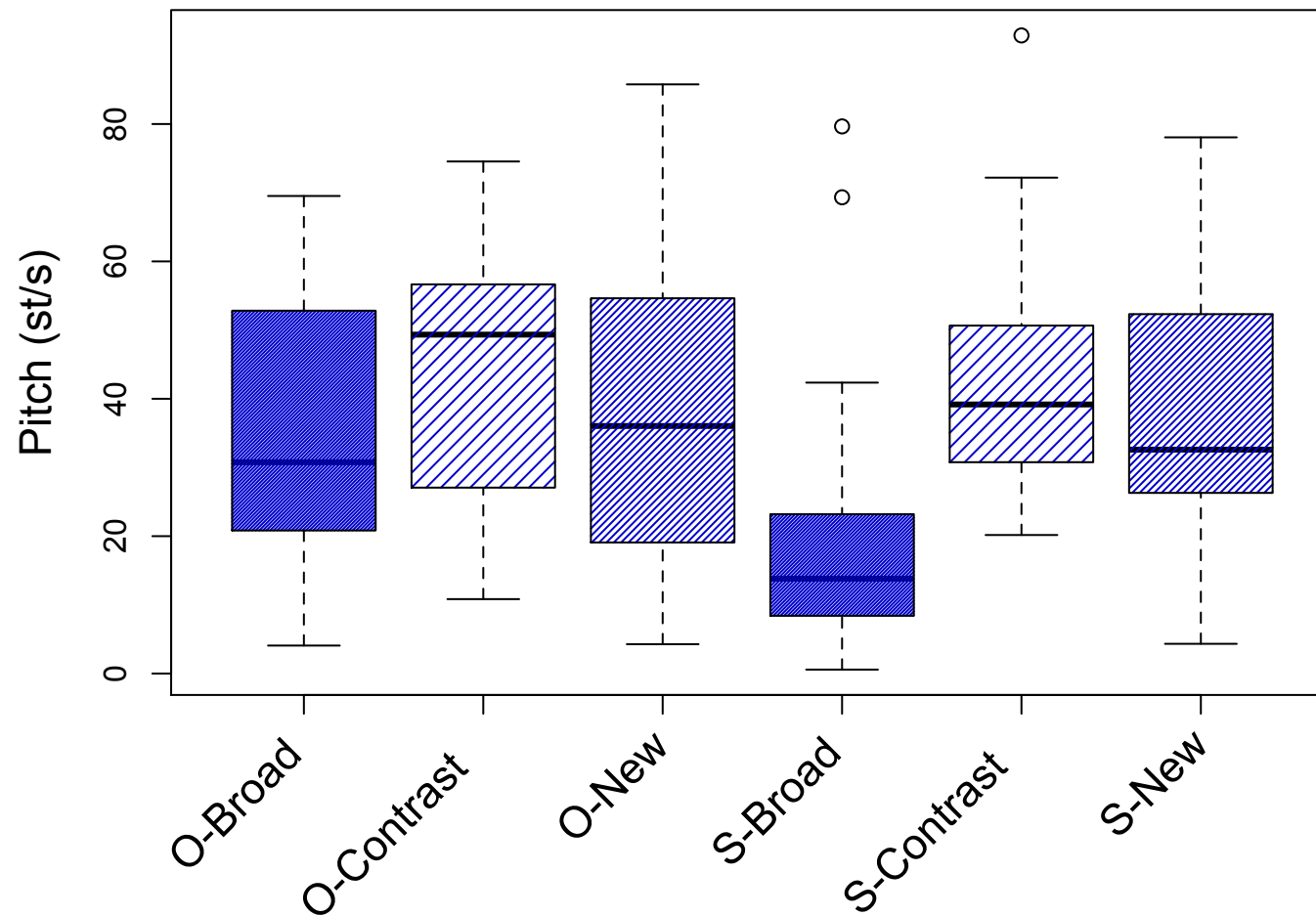
(Niebuhr, 2007)



smaller slope =
flatter contour

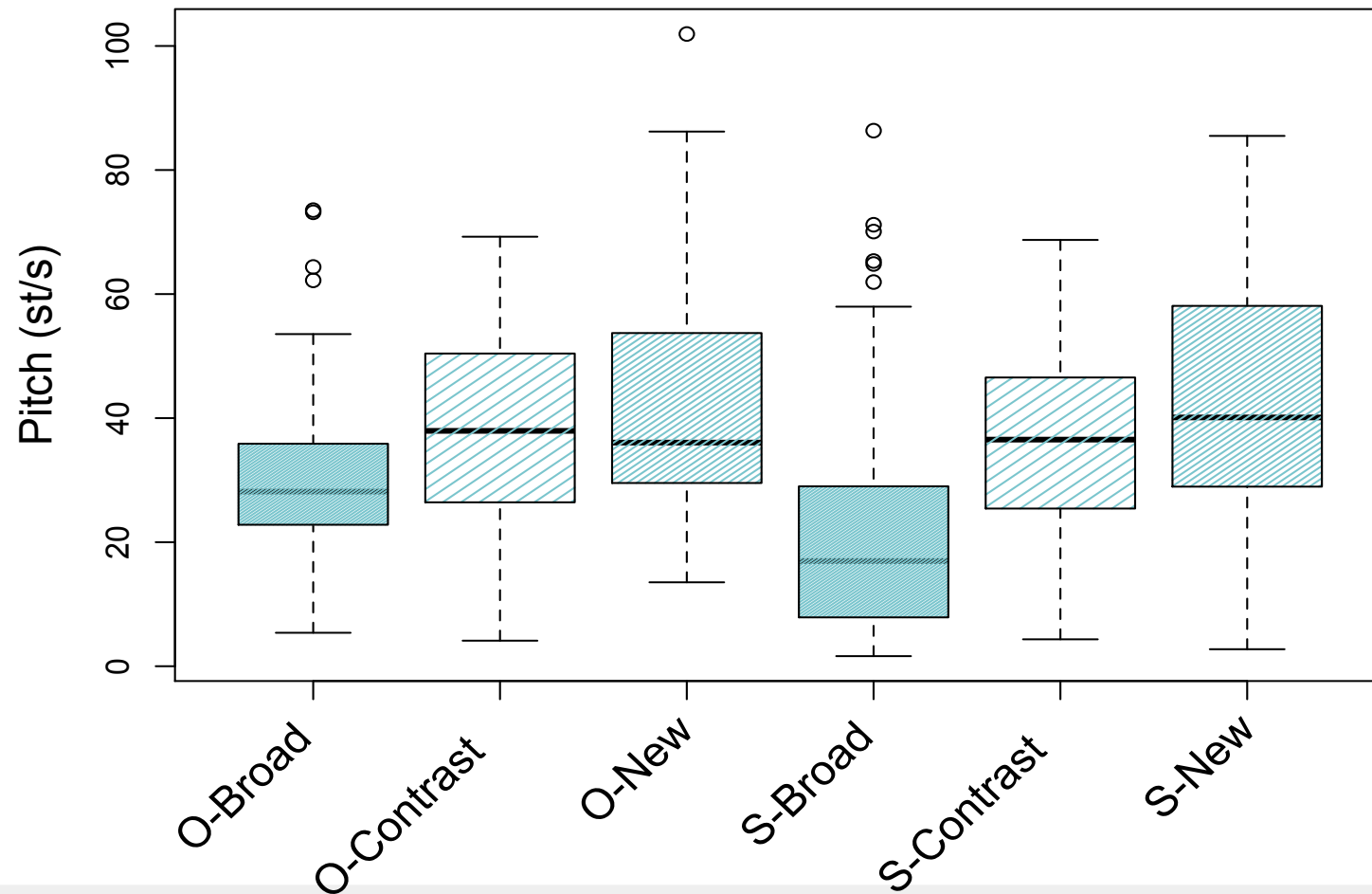


Slope: SVO





Slope: OVS





Theoretic interpretation

syntactic input:

$[[NP_{SUBJ} [V NP_{OBJ}]]_{BROAD}$
 $[[NP_{OBJ} [V] [N_{SUBJ}]]_{BROAD}$

prosodic output:

$(\quad * \quad)_l$
 $(* \quad)_\phi (\quad * \quad)_\phi$
 $(* \quad)_\omega (* \quad)_\omega (* \quad)_\omega$
Leena maalis vaala



syntactic/semantic input:

[[NP_{SUBJ}]_{NEW} [V NP_{OBJ}]]
[[NP_{OBJ}]_{NEW} [V] [N_{SUBJ}]]
[[NP_{SUBJ}]_{FOC} [V NP_{OBJ}]]
[[NP_{OBJ}]_{FOC} [V] [N_{SUBJ}]]

prosodic output:

(*)_i
(*)_φ
(*)_ω (*)_ω (*)_ω
Leena maalis vaala



Left-dislocated contrasts in Estonian

Consequences on intonation?

Sentence intonation reflects the FOC

=> Direct interface between intonation and FOC

Just as in Hindi and German

(Hindi (Patil et al., 2008), German (Féry&Kügler, 2008))



Thank you!
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